

CONFIDENTIAL PTQ7570

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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AGRE-00	AID-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	SMEC-00
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	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	DCP-01
	NSAE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00
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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6235  
INFO SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY  
AMEMBASSY ROME  
NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 HARARE 003078

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/07/00  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [EAGR](#) [PINR](#) [ZI](#)  
SUBJECT: POLITICALLY MOTIVATED VIOLENCE: SHOCKING  
PERSONAL TESTIMONIALS FROM COMMERCIAL FARMERS,  
BUSINESSPEOPLE, AND MDC ACTIVISTS

DEPT FOR A/F PDAS POWELL AND DAS SCHNEIDMAN, AF/S RENDER  
AND GURNEY

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NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR GAYLE SMITH

LONDON FOR PFLAUMER

PARIS FOR BISA WILLIAMS

DEPT PASS TO USTR FOR ROSA WITAKER

ROME PASS VATICAN  
CLASSIFIED BY POLITICAL OFFICER MAKILA JAMES, REASONS  
1.5 (B) AND (D).

REFTEL: A) HARARE 2961, B) HARARE 2560

1. (C) SUMMARY: SEVERAL WHITE COMMERCIAL FARMERS AND BUSINESSPEOPLE TOLD AMBASSADOR MCDONALD JUNE 5 OF THE CONTINUING POLITICAL VIOLENCE ON THEIR OCCUPIED PROPERTIES AND THE SURROUNDING AREAS, DURING PRIVATE MEETINGS WITH THEM IN MASHONALAND WEST PROVINCE. A BLACK MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE (MDC) OFFICIAL ALSO INFORMED THE AMBASSADOR ABOUT THE LEVEL OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN THIS AREA, WHICH HE SAID WAS ORCHESTRATED BY SENIOR OFFICIALS OF ZANU-PF AND CARRIED OUT BY HIRED THUGS ON BEHALF OF THE RULING PARTY. THE BASIC MESSAGE WAS THAT THE FARM OCCUPATIONS HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH LAND REFORM, BUT MERELY PROVIDED A PRETEXT UNDER WHICH TO MOVE "WAR VETERANS" ON TO COMMERCIAL AND COMMUNAL LANDS IN ORDER TO TERRORIZE PEOPLE INTO SUPPORTING ZANU-PF DURING THE RUN-UP TO THE JUNE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION. THE CONSENSUS WAS THAT IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO PURSUE SERIOUS LAND REFORM DISCUSSIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT

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UNTIL AFTER THE ELECTION. NEVERTHELESS, THESE CONTACTS MAINTAIN THAT THE MDC CONTINUES TO HAVE BROAD SUPPORT IN THESE COMMUNITIES AND WILL WIN A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF SEATS. THE GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER, IS MOVING TO DISENFRANCHISE PRIMARILY WHITE VOTERS BY OMITTING THEIR NAMES FROM THE VOTERS' ROLLS AND MISINFORMING THEM ABOUT THEIR RIGHT TO CORRECT SUCH OMISSIONS. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) ON JUNE 5 AMBASSADOR MCDONALD, ACCOMPANIED BY POLOFF AND THE RSO ASSISTANT, TRAVELED TO SOME OF ZIMBABWE'S MOST PRODUCTIVE COMMERCIAL FARMLAND, IN THE MASHONALAND WEST PROVINCE IN THE TOWNS OF BANKET, CHINOYI AND DOMA. MANY OF THESE FARMS ARE ON THE LIST OF 804 PROPERTIES PROPOSED FOR IMMINENT GOVERNMENT ACQUISITION (REFTEL A). THIS PROVINCE HAS ALSO SEEN SOME OF THE MOST EXTREME POLITICAL VIOLENCE, INCLUDING THE DEATH OF TWO MDC ORGANIZERS IN KARIBA TOWN, AND BRUTALIZATION OF FARM WORKERS IN RAFFINGORA AND OTHER AREAS (REFTEL B). AMBASSADOR MCDONALD MADE UNANNOUNCED CALLS ON SEVERAL BUSINESS PEOPLE WHO WERE EAGER AND PLEASED TO TALK ABOUT THE ONGOING POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN THE AREA. IN BANKET WE STOPPED AT ITICON IRRIGATION

CONSULTANTS, WHICH SUPPLIES IRRIGATION EQUIPMENT TO MOST OF THE COMMERCIAL FARMERS IN THE AREA. THE MANAGERS WITH WHOM WE SPOKE SAID THERE HAD BEEN WIDESPREAD POLITICAL INTIMIDATION IN THE AREA, PARTICULARLY THE COMMUNITY OF RAFFINGORA. SIMILARLY, WE HEARD OF MORE POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH THE OWNER OF THE BANKET FARMERS' CENTER, A PROSPEROUS LOOKING FARM EQUIPMENT SUPPLY COMPANY, WHO IS AN ADMITTED MDC ORGANIZER AND FINANCIAL BACKER IN THAT COMMUNITY. YET  
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MORE ATTACKS AND INCIDENTS OF HUMILIATION OF FARM OWNERS AND WORKERS WERE DESCRIBED TO US DURING A CALL ON OFFICIALS AT THE ELECTRO-ELECT COMPANY IN CHINHOYI, WHICH PROVIDES ELECTRICAL FIXTURES AND REPAIRS AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT FOR THE AREA'S COMMERCIAL FARMS.

13. (C) ACCORDING TO THESE BUSINESSPEOPLE AND COMMERCIAL FARMERS:

-- COMMERCIAL AND COMMUNAL FARM WORKERS ARE FORCED TO ATTEND ALL NIGHT ZANU-PF POLITICAL RALLIES AND BEATEN FOR ANY SIGNS OF RESISTANCE OR OPPOSITION PARTY SUPPORT. WHILE THOSE BEATINGS OCCURRED ON ALL OCCUPIED PROPERTIES, THE CURRENT STRATEGY IS FOCUSED ON THE MORE ISOLATED WORKERS IN THE COMMUNAL AREAS, TEACHERS AND NURSES;

-- MANY FARM WORKER WOMEN HAVE BEEN RAPED ON THE FARMS, AS WELL AS AT LEAST ONE MDC SUPPORTER WHO WAS TAKEN TO A NOW NOTORIOUS HOTEL IN KARIBA, THE ZAMBEZI VALLEY HOTEL, WHERE SHE WAS GANG RAPED BY ZANU-PF SUPPORTERS. THE FEMALE MAYOR OF KARIBA AND HER HUSBAND, WHO WERE FORCED TO ALLOW THEIR PREMISES TO BE USED BY ZANU-PF THUGS, REPORTEDLY OWN THIS HOTEL. THESE RAPE VICTIMS HAVE BEEN GENERALLY AFRAID TO REPORT THEIR ORDEAL.

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P 071612Z JUN 00  
FM AMEMBASSY HARARE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6236  
INFO SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY  
AMEMBASSY ROME  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 04 HARARE 003078

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/07/00  
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BUSINESSPEOPLE, AND MDC ACTIVISTS

-- FARM OWNERS AND MANAGERS ARE HUMILIATED BY FORCING THEM TO COVER THEMSELVES IN WATER AND DIRT AND ROLL AROUND ON THE GROUND, MEN WERE MADE TO WEAR DRESSES,  
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FARMERS AND THEIR WIVES FORCED TO DANCE TO REVOLUTIONARY SONGS, DENOUNCE THE MDC AND PLEDGE LOYALTY TO ZANU-PF, AND FARMERS WERE FORCED TO FEED THE OCCUPYING VETS AND TO FERRY THEIR WORKERS TO ZANU-PF RALLIES;

-- WHITE FARMERS AND BUSINESSPEOPLE WHO ARE BELIEVED TO BE SUPPORTERS OF THE MDC HAVE HAD THEIR BUSINESSES ATTACKED BY STONE-THROWING CROWDS, HAVE BEEN THREATENED WITH PHYSICAL HARM IF THEY FAILED TO STOP SUPPORTING THE OPPOSITION, HAD THEIR PHONES ARE TAPPED, AND CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATION (CIO) MEMBERS FOLLOW THEM. WHILE SOME OF THESE BUSINESS PEOPLE WILL TEMPORARILY LEAVE ZIMBABWE OR CLOSE UP DURING THE VOTING AND POST-ELECTION PERIOD, MOST HAVE NO PLACE TO GO PERMANENTLY AND WILL REMAIN;

-- NON-ZIMBABWEAN FARM LABORERS HAVE BEEN THREATENED WITH DEPORTATION BACK TO THEIR COUNTRIES OR DEATH IF THEY VOTE AGAINST ZANU-PF IN THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION.

THREATS AGAINST MDC

14. (C) THE POLITICAL VIOLENCE HAS BEEN SYSTEMATICALLY ORGANIZED BY KEY ZANU-PF OFFICIALS, INCLUDING THE GOVERNOR FOR MASHONALAND CENTRAL, BORDER GEZI, WHO HAS BEEN IN COMPETITION WITH THE MASHONALAND WEST GOVERNOR, PETER CHANESTA, AND THE MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TECHNOLOGY, IGNATIUS CHOMBO, FOR TURF AND POLITICAL FAVOR WITH PRESIDENT MUGABE, ACCORDING TO THESE MASHONALAND BUSINESSPEOPLE. CONSEQUENTLY, GEZI HAS

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PERSONALLY SPEARHEADED VIOLENCE ON THE BORDER OF THE TWO PROVINCES, WHICH HAS SPILLED OVER TO RAFFINGORA AND CENTENARY, SITES OF THE MOST BRUTAL POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN THE AREA. THE OTHER RULING PARTY POLITICIANS, WHILE NOT AS VIOLENT AS GEZI, HAVE ENCOURAGED THEIR SUPPORTERS TO FORCEFULLY ASSURE THE PARTY'S VICTORY IN THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION. THE MANAGER OF THE BANKET FARMERS' CENTER GAVE US A COPY OF A LETTER WRITTEN BY A LOCAL CATHOLIC PARISH PRIEST TO THE ZANU-PF CANDIDATE FOR BANKET, PLEADING WITH HIM TO STOP ADVOCATING VIOLENCE, SPECIFICALLY THE CANDIDATE'S CALL FOR DEATH TO MDC SUPPORTERS. THE BUSINESSPEOPLE URGED OUR STRONG SUPPORT FOR DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL ELECTION MONITORS TO ENSURE THAT THE VOTE WAS NOT STOLEN.

15. THE BANKET MANAGER TOLD US THAT DESPITE THE VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION, HE AND OTHER WHITE BUSINESSMEN CONTINUED TO SUPPORT THE MDC. HE SAID HE HELPED MDC CANDIDATES GET ON THE BALLOT FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY VOTE AND SOLICITED FUNDS FOR THE OPPOSITION PARTY. THE MDC OFFICIAL WHO WAS TO APPROVE THE CANDIDACY OF MDC REPRESENTATIVES AT THE NOMINATING CENTER ON JUNE 3 WAS RUN OFF THE ROAD THAT MORNING, BUT SURVIVED AND ARRIVED IN TIME TO ENSURE THE REGISTRATION OF THE OPPOSITION PARTY CANDIDATES, HE INFORMED. BASED ON AN ANALYSIS OF EACH CONSTITUENCY IN THE AREA, THE MDC ORGANIZER ESTIMATED THAT THE MDC WOULD TAKE BETWEEN 75 TO 80 PERCENT OF THE KEY AREAS IN MASHONALALAND WEST, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ZVIMBA SOUTH, MUGABE'S HOME AREA. MDC CANDIDATES IN THE AREA CANNOT CAMPAIGN, HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF THE THREATS AGAINST THEM AND THEIR SUPPORTERS BY WAR

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VETERANS, ACCORDING TO THIS BUSINESSMAN.

REGISTRATION AND CAMPAIGN CONCERNS

16. (C) ALL THE BUSINESS PEOPLE EXPRESSED CONCERNS ABOUT WHETHER THEY WOULD BE INCLUDED ON THE VOTERS' ROLLS. THEY NOTED THAT NO REGISTRATION RECEIPTS HAD BEEN ISSUED, AS WAS THE NORM IN PREVIOUS ELECTIONS. THERE IS HOWEVER, NO LEGAL REQUIREMENT TO ISSUE SUCH RECEIPTS SO COURT CHALLENGES TO THE OMISSION OF THEIR NAMES WOULD BE DIFFICULT. ADDITIONALLY, IT WAS WIDELY BELIEVED THAT THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO REMOVE EUROPEAN SOUNDING NAMES FROM THE ROLLS, AND HAS STATED THAT IT WILL UNILATERALLY STRIKE THE NAMES OF ANYONE BELIEVED TO STILL HOLD A BRITISH PASSPORT. SOME OF THE WHITE BUSINESS PEOPLE SAID THEIR NAMES WERE NOT ON THE ROLLS WHEN THEY INSPECTED IT RECENTLY, DESPITE HAVING SIGNED UP ALONG WITH ALL THEIR BLACK EMPLOYEES AT THEIR WORK PLACE. THESE WHITES SAID THE INSPECTION OFFICIALS SAID THEY COULD NOT VOTE IN THE UPCOMING PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION AND THAT ANY CORRECTION WOULD ONLY APPLY TO FUTURE ELECTIONS. THIS INFORMATION CONTRADICTS THE REGISTRAR GENERAL'S PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE VOTERS' ROLLS, WHICH ARE OPEN FOR INSPECTION FROM JUNE 1 TO 13 ACROSS THE COUNTY, WILL BE AMENDED DURING THE ELEVEN DAYS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 04 HARARE 003078

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BEFORE VOTING TO CORRECT OMISSIONS. THERE HAS ALSO BEEN  
ONLY A LIMITED CAMPAIGN ON THE NEED FOR ALL VOTERS TO  
INSPECT THE ROLLS, CONSEQUENTLY, IT IS HARD TO TELL AT  
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THIS POINT HOW WIDESPREAD VOTER DISENFRANCHISEMENT MAY  
BE OR WHETHER PEOPLE ARE BEING ALLOWED TO CORRECT  
ERRORS. EVEN SOME MDC CANDIDATES WERE ORIGINALLY  
OMITTED FROM THE ROLLS AND WERE SUBSEQUENTLY ALLOWED TO  
HAVE THEIR NAMES ADDED. THIS MAY NOT, HOWEVER, BE THE  
CASE FOR THE AVERAGE VOTER.

17. (C) AN MDC EXECUTIVE MEMBER WHO IS EMPLOYED AT ONE  
OF THE COMPANIES WE VISITED TOLD US THAT HIS PARTY IS  
UNABLE TO CAMPAIGN IN PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, SPECIFICALLY  
MASHONALAND WEST AND CENTRAL, BECAUSE OF THE ATTACKS ON  
THEIR CANDIDATES AND VOTERS. THE MDC CAN NO LONGER GO  
INTO CERTAIN RURAL AREAS TO ADDRESS THE WIDESPREAD VOTER  
INTIMIDATION OR TO CORRECT MISINFORMATION BEING SPREAD  
ABOUT ITS PARTY, HE ADDED. THE MDC OFFICIAL THEN  
RECITED A HORRIFIC STORY OF AN MDC ORGANIZER IN KARIBA  
BEING DRAGGED FROM HIS WORKPLACE AND BEATEN TO DEATH BY  
ZANU-PF SUPPORTERS, DRIVEN AROUND TOWN, AND THEN HIS  
CORPSE HAVING BEEN DUMPED AT HIS HOME. SIMILARLY, THE  
MDC OFFICIAL AND OTHERS IN THE AREA ECHOED STORIES OF  
TORTURE OF OPPOSITION SUPPORTERS AT THE ZAMBEZI VALLEY  
HOTEL IN KARIBA, UNDER THE DIRECTION OF A LOCAL WARLORD,  
"REX JESUS." REX JESUS AND 14 OTHERS WERE ARRESTED FOR  
THE MURDER OF THE KARIBA MDC OFFICIAL, BUT FEW EXPECT  
HIM TO BE PROSECUTED. THE MDC REPRESENTATIVE SAID EVEN  
SENIOR POLICE OFFICIALS IN KARIBA WERE INVOLVED IN  
COVERING UP THE ATTACKS ON OPPOSITION SUPPORTERS IN THE  
AREA. MDC SUPPORTERS WERE EVEN FREQUENTLY BEATEN IN ONE  
POLICE STATION IN KARIBA BY ZANU-PF OFFICIALS, UNTIL  
COMPLAINTS WERE MADE TO POLICE HEADQUARTERS AND THE  
COMMISSIONER, IDENTIFIED BY THE SURNAME "MBUNDU" WAS  
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TRANSFERRED. THE MDC OFFICIAL SAID THE VICTIMIZATION  
CAMPAIGN HAD SHIFTED FROM GROUPS, I.E., WHITE FARMERS,  
TO INDIVIDUALS FARM WORKERS OR OPPOSITION SUPPORTERS.

SECRECY OF BALLOT QUESTIONED  
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18. (C) AN ADDITIONAL AREA OF GREAT CONCERN WAS THE  
CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE BALLOT. SEVERAL OF THE WHITE

SIPDIS  
BUSINESSMEN EXPRESSED FEARS THAT THE BALLOT PAPERS WOULD  
BE NUMBERED TO CORRESPOND WITH THE NAMES OF THE VOTERS,  
THUS PINPOINTING THEM FOR RETRIBUTION AFTER THE  
ELECTION. OTHERS NOTED THAT GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND  
RULING PARTY SUPPORTERS WERE TELLING ILLITERATE RURAL  
VOTERS THAT THEIR VOTE WOULD BE MONITORED AND THAT  
ENTIRE COMMUNITIES WOULD BE PUNISHED IF ANY OF ITS  
MEMBERS VOTED FOR THE OPPOSITION. WHILE SOME CIVIL  
SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS ARE PLANNING A MODEST CIVIC  
EDUCATION EXERCISE TO UNDERSCORE THE SECRECY OF THE  
BALLOT, THEY DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA,  
PARTICULARLY THE STATE-OWNED RADIO, AND WILL HAVE ONLY A  
LIMITED REACH IN THE RURAL AREAS. THE LEGAL RESOURCES  
FOUNDATION (LRF) IS ONE SUCH GROUP THAT HAS PREPARED A  
MILLION COPIES OF A CARTOON FLYER TO PROMOTE THE SECRET  
BALLOT. THIS IDEA WAS PROPOSED TO LRF BY CAMBODIAN  
HUMAN RIGHTS LEADER, DR. KEK GALABRU, ONE OF THE EXPERTS  
WHO VISITED ZIMBABWE LAST MONTH UNDER THE EMBASSY'S  
"EMINENT PERSONS PROGRAM."

FARM INVASIONS NOT ABOUT LAND REFORM  
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19. (C) IN DOMA, THE AMBASSADOR HAD A LUNCHEON WITH  
SEVEN TOBACCO AND OTHER COMMERCIAL FARMERS WHO  
REPRESENTED PROPERTY OWNERS FROM A SUBSTANTIAL AREA  
NORTH OF HARARE, COVERING TWO PROVINCES, AND FROM  
OCCUPIED FARMS IN THOSE AREAS. THE LUNCHEON HOST'S FARM  
WAS NOT OCCUPIED, HOWEVER, A FACT THAT HIS FAMILY

ATTRIBUTED TO LUCK AND PERHAPS A REPUTATION FOR GOOD  
EMPLOYEE RELATIONS, BUT ADMITTED THAT HE DID NOT KNOW  
HOW THEY ESCAPED THE SQUATTERS. THE UNEQUIVOCAL  
CONSENSUS OF EVERYONE WITH WHOM WE SPOKE WAS THAT THE  
FARM INVASIONS WERE NOT ABOUT LAND REFORM AT ALL, BUT A  
MERE PRETEXT FOR MOVING WAR VETERANS AND ZANU-PF  
SUPPORTERS INTO THE RURAL AREAS TO INTIMIDATE PEOPLE  
INTO SUPPORTING THE RULING PARTY DURING THE  
PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION. LAND REFORM DISCUSSIONS CANNOT  
BEGIN IN EARNEST UNTIL AFTER THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION  
WHEN THE GOVERNMENT IS MORE LIKELY TO ABANDON ITS  
STRATEGY OF OCCUPATIONS TO GET OUT THE VOTE, THESE  
CONTACTS OPINED. THEY SAID THEY HAD ALREADY OFFERED  
SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF FARMS TO THE GOVERNMENT FOR LAND  
REFORM THROUGH THE COMMERCIAL FARMERS UNION (CFU), BUT  
THE GOVERNMENT HAD NO DESIRE TO SETTLE THE LAND QUESTION  
DURING THIS POLITICAL SEASON. THEY ANTICIPATED THAT  
THESE DISCUSSIONS WOULD MOVE FORWARD AFTER THE ELECTION.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 04 OF 04 HARARE 003078

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110. (C) ONE TOBACCO FARMER RECOUNTED HOW HE HAD BEEN  
INVADED AND EVICTED OFF HIS FARM ON THREE SEPARATE  
OCCASIONS BY WAR VETS UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF ANOTHER  
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WARLORD, "JESUS TWO." DURING THESE SESSIONS, HE WAS  
BEATEN AND Demeaned. COMMERCIAL FARMERS NATIONALLY HAVE  
ESTABLISHED A RADIO NET ON WHICH THEY PROVIDE EMERGENCY  
INFORMATION ON OCCUPATIONS AND A NIGHTLY SITUATION  
REPORT. THE BANKET FARMERS SAID THEIR NET ALONE HAS 200  
CALL SIGNS. DURING SEVERAL OCCUPATIONS IN THE AREA, THE  
BESIEGED FARMER WOULD RADIO FOR HELP AND OTHER FARMERS  
CALLED FOR POLICE HELP AND THEN DROVE TO THE LOCATION TO  
MONITOR THE SITUATION AS IT DEVELOPED. THE ASSISTING  
FARMERS SAID THEY ALWAYS CAME UNARMED AND GENERALLY  
REFRAINED FROM DIRECT INVOLVEMENT, AS THE 100 TO 200 WAR  
VETS WHO COME OUTNUMBER THEM. ONE OF THE INVADED  
FARMERS TOLD US MOST OF THE OCCUPIERS WERE COMMUNAL FARM  
WORKERS WHO WERE FORCED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE INVASIONS  
OUT OF FEAR OF REPRISAL AGAINST THEM. HE HELD NO ILL  
WILL AGAINST THEM, HE SAID. THE OCCUPIERS MAKE THEIR  
DEMANDS KNOWN, NEGOTIATE THEIR PRESENCE ON THE LAND  
(I.E., WHAT RATIONS THE FARMER WILL PROVIDE) AND THEN  
RETREAT TO A SECTION OF THE FARM. THE SUBSEQUENT  
VIOLENCE THAT OCCURS IS ORGANIZED BY A HAND-FULL OF  
"EXCITABLE YOUTH" OR ASPIRING WARLORDS, BUT NOT GENUINE  
WAR VETS. THE WAR VETS ARE FACTION-RIDDEN, WITH STRONG  
ETHNIC AND ZANU/ZAPU TENSIONS ACCOUNTING FOR THE LACK OF  
ANY CONSISTENT STRATEGY OR STABILITY ON THE OCCUPIED  
FARMS, THE FARMERS ADDED.

THE ECONOMIC FUTURE

111. (C) THE FARMERS AND BUSINESS PEOPLE DESCRIBED THE  
FINANCIAL LOSSES THEY WERE SUFFERING AS A RESULT OF THE  
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FARM INVASIONS AND GOVERNMENT PLANS TO ACQUIRE 804  
PRODUCTIVE FARMS. THE COMMERCIAL FARMERS URGED THE U.S.  
TO CONSIDER AN ECONOMIC "RECOVERY PLAN" FOR FARMERS  
AFTER THE ELECTION, INCLUDING INTEREST-FREE, OFFSHORE

LOANS. AMBASSADOR MCDONALD EXPLAINED THAT SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT WOULD NOT HAPPEN, BUT STRESSED THAT WITHIN OUR FINANCIAL MEANS THE USG WANTED TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT LAND REFORM.

COMMENT

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12. (C) AMBASSADOR MCDONALD USED THIS TRIP TO REITERATE OUR STRONG CONDEMNATION OF THE POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND TO INFORM THESE ZIMBABWEANS OF OUR SUPPORT FOR DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL MONITORING EFFORTS. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE KNOWN FOR SOME TIME THAT THESE GROSS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS WERE OCCURRING AND HAVE REPORTED THEM, IT IS SHOCKING TO HEAR IT FROM THESE PERSONAL TESTIMONIALS. IT IS HEARTENING TO KNOW THAT THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN VICTIMIZED ARE STILL OPTIMISTIC ABOUT ZIMBABWE'S FUTURE AND INTEND TO STAY. THE VISIT WAS VERY WELL RECEIVED SHORING UP THOSE WE MET AND IS LIKELY TO HAVE THE DUAL EFFECT OF APPRISING THE GENERAL ELECTORATE, AS WELL AS GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IS AWARE OF THE STATE-ORCHESTRATED VIOLENCE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. THE GENERAL SENSE WE GOT WAS THAT DESPITE THE PRE-ELECTION VIOLENCE THE OPPOSITION REMAINS POISED TO TAKE A SIZEABLE NUMBER OF SEATS. TO DATE, WE HAVE CONSERVATIVELY ESTIMATED AROUND 30 SEATS. THAT NUMBER MAY NEED TO BE REVISED UPWARDS, WITH INDICATIONS THAT  
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MDC COULD GET AS MANY AS 45 TO 55 SEATS.

13. (C) THERE REMAINS A GREAT CONCERN THAT THE RULING PARTY WILL RIG THE VOTE COUNT TO PREVENT ANY MDC MAJORITY FROM SITTING IN THE PARLIAMENT. IF THAT HAPPENS, THE BIGGEST THREAT TO PEACE IN THE COUNTRY WILL BE THE POST-ELECTION PERIOD WHEN THE GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION ARE LIKELY TO DISPUTE THE RESULTS. NO ONE CAN SAY WITH CERTAINTY WHAT WILL HAPPEN AT THAT POINT, BUT THE MILITARY HAS TWICE DISTANCED ITSELF FROM ANY PERCEPTION THAT IT HAS AN INTEREST IN THE OUTCOME OF THE ELECTION. END COMMENT.

MCDONALD

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